



Mr. Bannister as Macheath.



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THE
BEGGAR'S OPERA.

WRITTEN BY

MR. GAY.

Taken from the

MANAGER'S BOOK,

AT THE

Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane.

L O N D O N :

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Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Macheath's Gang.	Peachum,	—	—	Mr. Moody.
	Lockit,	—	—	Mr. Baddeley.
	Macheath,	—	—	Mr. Bannister.
	Filch,	—	—	Mr. Parsons.
	Jemmy Twitcher,			
	Crookfinger'd Jack,			
	Wat. Dreary,			
	Robin of Bagshot,			
	Nimming Ned,			
	Harry Paddington,			
	Mat. of the Mint,	—	—	Mr. Gaudry.
	Ben. Budge,	—	—	Mr. Burton.
	Beggar,	—	—	Mr. Waldron.
	Player,	—	—	Mr. Wrighten.

Constables, Drawer, Turnkey, &c.

W O M E N.

Wom. of the Town.	Mrs. Peachum,	—	—	Mrs. Hopkins.
	Polly Peachum,	—	—	Mrs. Gargill.
	Lucy Lockit,	—	—	Mrs. Wrighten.
	Diana Trapes,	—	—	Mrs. Love.
	Mrs. Coaxer,			
	Dolly Trull,			
	Mrs. Vixen,			
	Betty Doxy,			
	Jenny Diver,	—	—	Miss Kirby.
	Mrs. Slammerkin,			
	Sukey Tawdry,			
	Molly Brizen.			

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JUNE 15, 1927

INTRODUCTION.

BEGGAR, PLAYER.

Beggar.

IF poverty be a title to poetry, I am sure nobody can dispute mine. I own myself of the Company of Beggars, and I make one at their weekly festivals at St. Giles's. I have a small yearly salary for my catches, and am welcome to a dinner there whenever I please, which is more than most poets can say.

Play. As we live by the Muses, it is but gratitude in us to encourage poetical merit whenever we find it. The Muses, contrary to all other ladies, pay no distinction to dress, and never partially mistake the pettoes of embroidery for wit, nor the modesty of want for dulness. Be the author who he will, we push his play as far as it will go: so (though you are in want) I wish you success heartily.

Beg. This piece, I own was originally writ for the celebrating the marriage of James Chanter and Moll Lay, two most excellent ballad-singers. I have introduced the similies that are in all your celebrated operas, The Swallow, The Moth, The Bee, The Ship, The Flower, &c.: besides, I have a prison scene, which the ladies always reckon charmingly pathetic. As to the parts, I have observed such a nice impartiality to our two ladies, that it is impossible for either of them to take offence. I hope I may be forgiven that I have not made my Opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue, for I have no recitative excepting this. As I have consented to have neither prologue nor epilogue, it must be allowed an Opera in all its forms. The piece indeed hath been heretofore frequently represented by ourselves in our great room at St. Giles's, so that I cannot too often acknowledge your charity in bringing it now on the stage.

Play. But I see it is time for us to withdraw; the actors are preparing to begin. Play away the overture.

[*Exeunt.*]

The BEGGAR's OPERA.

ACT I. SCENE, Peachum's House.

Peachum sitting at a Table, with a large Book of Accounts before him.

AIR I. *An old woman clothed in grey.*

THROUGH all the employments of life
Each neighbour abuses his brother;
Whore and rogue they call husband and wife;
All professions be-rogue one another.
The priest calls the lawyer a cheat,
The lawyer be-knaves the divine;
And the statesman, because he's so great,
Thinks his trade as honest as mine.

A lawyer is an honest employment, so is mine. Like me too he acts in a double capacity, both against rogues and for 'em; for 'tis but fitting that we should protect and encourage cheats, since we live by 'em.

Enter Filch.

Filch. Sir, Black Moll hath sent word her trial comes on in the afternoon, and she hopes you will order matters so as to bring her off.

Peach. Why, she may plead her belly at worst; to my knowledge she hath taken care of that security. But as the wench is very active and industrious, you may satisfy her that I'll soften the evidence.

Filch. Tom Gagg, Sir, is found guilty.

Peach. A lazy dog! When I took him the time before, I told him what he would come to if he did not mend his hand. This is death without reprieve. I may venture to book him; [*Writes*] for Tom Gagg forty pounds. Let Betty Sly know that I'll save her from transportation, for I can get more by her staying in England.

Filch. Betty hath brought more goods into our lock this year than any five of the gang; and in truth, 'tis pity to lose so good a customer.

Peach. If none of the gang takes her off, she may, in the common course of business, live a twelvemonth longer. I love to let women 'scape. A good sportsman always lets the hen-partridges fly, because the breed of the game depends upon them. Besides, here the law allows us no reward: there is nothing to be got by the death of a woman—except our wives.

Filch. Without dispute she is a fine woman! 'Twas to her I was obliged for my education, (to say a bold word) she hath trained up more young fellows to the business, than the gaming-table.

Peach. Truly, *Filch*, thy observation is right. We and the surgeons are more beholden to women, than all the professions besides.

AIR II. *The bonny grey-ty'd morn, &c.*

Filch. 'Tis woman that seduces all mankind,

By her we were first taught the wheedling arts;
Her very eyes can cheat; when most she's kind,
She tricks us of our money with our hearts.

For her, like wolves by night we roam for prey,
And practise ev'ry fraud to bribe her charms;
For suits of love, like law, are won by pay,
And beauty must be fee'd into our arms.

Peach. But make haste to Newgate, boy, and let my friends know what I intend; for I love to make them easy one way or other.

Filch. When a gentleman is long kept in suspense, penitence may break his spirit ever after. Besides, certainty gives a man a good air upon his trial, and makes him risk another without fear or scruple. But I'll away, for 'tis a pleasure to be the messenger of comfort to friends in affliction. [Exit.]

Peach. But it is now high time to look about me for a decent execution against next sessions. I hate a lazy rogue, by whom one can get nothing till he is hanged. A register of the gang. [Reading.] Crookfinger'd Jack, a year and a half in the service: let me see how much the stock owes to his industry; one, two, three, four, five, gold watches, and seven silver ones. A mighty clean-handed fellow! sixteen snuff-boxes, five of them of true gold, six dozen of handkerchiefs, four silver-hilted swords, half a dozen of shirts, three tie-periwigs, and a piece of broad cloth. Considering these are only fruits of his leisure hours, I don't know a prettier, fellow for

6 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

no man alive hath a more engaging presence of mind upon the road. Wat. Dreary, alias Brown Will; an irregular dog! who hath an underhand way of disposing of his goods. I'll try him only for a session or two longer upon his good behaviour. Harry Paddington; a poor petty-larceny rascal, without the least genius! that fellow, though he were to live these six months, will never come to the gallows with any credit. Slippery Sam; he goes off the next session, for the villain hath the impudence to have views of following his trade as a tailor, which he calls an honest employment. Mat, of the Mint, listed not above a month ago; a promising sturdy fellow, and diligent in his way: somewhat too bold and hasty, and may raise good contributions on the public, if he does not cut himself short by murder. Tom Tiddle; a guzzling soaking sot, who is always too drunk to stand himself or to make others stand! a cart is absolutely necessary for him. Robin of Bagshot, alias Gorgion, alias Bluff Bob, alias Carbuncle, alias Bob Booty.

Enter Mrs. Peachum.

Mrs. Peach. What of Bob Booty, husband? I hope nothing bad hath betided him. You know, my dear, he's a favourite customer of mine; 'twas he made me a present of this ring.

Peach. I have set his name down in the black-list, that's all, my dear; he spends his life among women, and as soon as his money is gone, one or other of the ladies will hang him for the reward, and there's forty pounds lost to us for ever.

Mrs. Peach. You know, my dear, I never meddle in matters of death: I always leave those affairs to you. Women indeed are bitter bad judges in these cases, for they are so partial to the brave, that they think every man handsome who is going to the camp or the gallows.

* AIR III. *Cold and raw, &c.*

If any wench Venus's girdle wear,

Tho' she be never so ugly,

Lilies and roses will quickly appear,

And her face look wondrous smugly,

Beneath the left ear so fit but a cord

(A rope so charming a zone is!)

The youth in his cart hath the air of a lord,

And we cry, There dies an Adonis!

THE 'BEGGAR'S' OPERA. 7

But really, husband, you should not be too hardhearted, for you never had a finer, braver set of men than at present. We have not had a murder among them all these seven months; and truly, my dear, that is a great blessing.

Peach. What a dickens is the woman always whimpering about murder for? No gentleman is ever looked upon the worse for killing a man in his own defence; and if business cannot be carried on without it, what would you have a gentleman do?

Mrs. Peach. If I am in the wrong, my dear, you must excuse me; for nobody can help the frailty of an over-scrupulous conscience.

Peach. Murder is as fashionable a crime as a man can be guilty of. How many fine gentlemen have we in Newgate every year purely upon that article? If they have wherewithal to persuade the jury to bring it in manslaughter, what are they the worse for it? So, my dear, have done upon this subject. Was Captain MacHeath here this morning for the bank notes he left with you last week?

Mrs. Peach. Yes, my dear, and though the bank hath stop payment, he was so cheerful and so agreeable; sure there is not a finer gentleman upon the road than the captain! If he comes from Bagshot at any reasonable hour, he hath promised to make one this evening with Polly, me, and Bob Booty, at a party at quadrille. Nay, my dear, is the captain rich?

Peach. The captain keeps too good company over to grow rich. Marybone and the chocolate-houses are his undoing! The man that proposes to get money by play should have the education of a fine gentleman, and be trained up to it from his youth.

Mrs. Peach. Really I am sorry upon Polly's account the captain hath not more discretion. What business hath he to keep company with lords and gentlemen? he should leave them to prey upon one another.

Peach. Upon Polly's account! what a plague doth the woman mean?—Upon Polly's account!

Mrs. Peach. Capt. MacHeath is very fond of the girl.

Peach. And what then?

Mrs. Peach. If I have any skill in the ways of women, I am sure Polly thinks him a very pretty man.

Peach. And what then? you would not be so mad to have the wench marry him! Gamblers and highway-

8 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

men are generally very good to their whores, but they are very devils to their wives.

Mrs. Peach. But if Polly should be in love, how should we help her, or how can she help herself? Poor girl, I'm in the utmost concern about her.

AIR IV. *Why is your faithful slave disdain'd?*

If love the virgin heart invade,
How like a moth the simple maid

Still plays about the flame!

If soon she is not made a wife,

Her honour's sing'd, and then for life

She's—what I dare not name.

Peach. Look ye, wife, a handsome wench in our way of business is as profitable as at the bar of a Temple coffee-house, who looks upon it as her livelihood to grant every liberty but one. You see I would indulge the girl as far as prudently we can in any thing but marriage: After that, my dear, how shall we be safe? Are we not then in a husband's power? for a husband hath the absolute power over all a wife's secrets but her own. If the girl had the discretion of a court-lady, who can have a dozen young fellows at her ear without complying with one, I should not matter it; but Polly is tinder, and a spark will at once set her on a flame. Married! if the wench does not know her own profit, sure she knows her own pleasure better than to make herself a property! My daughter to me should be like a court-lady to a minister of state, a key to the whole gang. Married! if the affair is not already done, I'll terrify her from it by the example of our neighbours.

Mrs. Peach. Mayhap, my dear, you may injure the girl: she loves to imitate the fine ladies, and she may only allow the captain liberties in the view of interest.

Peach. But 'tis your duty, my dear, to warn the girl against her ruin, and to instruct her how to make the most of her beauty. I'll go to her this moment and fift her. In the mean time, wife, rip out the coronets and marks of these dozen of cambrick handkerchiefs, for I can dispose of them this afternoon to a chap in the city. [Exit.]

Mrs. Peach. Never was a man more out of the way in an argument than my husband! Why must our Polly forsooth differ from her sex, and love only her husband? And why must Polly's marriage, contrary to all obser-

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 9

vation, make her the less followed by other men? All men are thieves in love, and like a woman the better for being another's property.

AIR V. *Of all the simple things we do, &c.*

A maid is like the golden ore

Which hath guineas intrinsical in't,

Whose worth is never known before

It is try'd and imprest in the mint.

A wife's like a guinea in gold

Stamp'd with the name of her spouse,

Now here, now there, is bought or is sold,

And is current in ev'ry house.

Enter Filch.

Mrs. Peach. Come hither, Filch. I am as fond of this child as though my mind misgave me he were my own. He hath as fine a hand at picking a pocket as a woman, and is as nimble-fingered as a juggler. If an unlucky fession does not cut the rope of thy life, I pronounce, boy, thou wilt be a great man in history. Where was your post last night, my boy?

Filch. I ply'd at the opera, Madam; and considering 'twas neither dark nor rainy, so that there was no great hurry in getting chairs and coaches, made a tolerable hand on't. These seven handkerchiefs, Madam.

Mrs. Peach. Coloured ones, I see. They are of sure sale from our warehouse at Redriff among the seamen.

Filch. And this snuff-box.

Mrs. Peach. Set in gold! a pretty encouragement this to a young beginner.

Filch. I had a fair tug at a charming gold watch. Pox take the tailors for making the fobs so deep and narrow! It stuck by the way, and I was forced to make my escape under a coach. Really, Madam, I fear I shall be cut off in the flower of my youth, so that every now and then, since I was pumpt, I have thoughts of taking up and going to sea.

Mrs. Peach. You should go to Hockley-in-the-Hole and to Marybone, child, to learn valour: these are the schools that have bred so many brave men. I thought, boy, by this time, thou hadst lost fear as well as shame. Poor lad! how little does he know yet of the Old Bailey! For the first fact I'll insure thee from being hang'd; and going to sea, Filch, will come time enough

10 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

upon a sentence of transportation. But now, since you have nothing better to do, ev'n go to your book, and learn your catechism : for really a man makes but an ill figure in the ordinary's paper, who cannot give a satisfactory answer to his questions. But, hark you, my lad, Don't tell me a lye ; for you know I hate a liar. Do you know of any thing that hath pass'd between Captain Macheath and our Polly ?

Filch I beg you, Madam, don't ask me ; for I must either tell a lye to you, or to Miss Polly ; for I promised her I would not tell.

Mrs. Peach. But when the honour of our family is concern'd—

Filch. I shall lead a sad life with Miss Polly, if ever she comes to know I told you. Besides, I would not willingly forfeit my own honour by betraying any body.

Mrs. Peach. Yonder comes my husband and Polly. Come, Filch, you shall go with me into my own room, and tell me the whole story. I'll give thee a glass of a most delicious cordial that I keep for my own drinking.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Peachum and Polly.

Polly. I know as well as any of the fine ladies how to make the most of myself and of my man too. A woman knows how to be mercenary, though she hath never been in a court or at an assembly. We have it in our natures, papa. If I allow Captain Macheath some trifling liberties, I have this watch and other visible marks of his favour to shew for it. A girl who cannot grant some things, and refuse what is most material, will make but a poor hand of her beauty, and soon be thrown upon the common.

AIR VI. *What shall I do to shew how much I love her ?*

Virgins are like the fair flow'r in its lustre,

Which in the garden enamels the ground,

Near it the bees in play flutter and cluster,

And gaudy butterflies frolick around ;

But when once pluck'd 'tis no longer alluring,

To Covent-garden 'tis sent, (as yet sweet) [sing,

There fades, and shrinks, and grows past all endurance,
Rots, stinks, and dies, and is trod under feet.

Peach. You know, Polly, I am not against your toying and trifling with a customer in the way of business,

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 11

have play'd the fool, and are married, you jade you, I'll cut your throat, hussy. Now you know my mind.

Enter Mrs. Peachum.

AIR VII. *O London is a fine town.*

Mrs. Peachum [*in a very great passion.*]

Our Polly is a sad slut! nor heeds what we've taught
I wonder any man alive will ever rear a daughter! [her.
For she must have both hoods and gowns, and hoops
to swell her pride,

With scarfs and stays, and gloves and lace, and she
will have men beside;

And when she's dress'd with care and cost, all tempting,
fine and gay,

As men should serve a cucumber, she flings herself away.
You baggage! you hussy! you inconsiderate jade! had
you been hang'd, it would not have vex'd me, for that
might have been your misfortune; but to do such a mad
thing by choice! The wench is married, husband!

Peach: Married! the captain is a bold man, and will
risk any thing for money: to be sure he believes her
fortune. Do you think your mother and I should have
lived comfortably so long together if ever we had been
married, baggage?

Mrs. Peach. I knew she was always a proud slut, and
now the wench hath played the fool and married, be-
cause, forsooth, she would do like the gentry. Can you
support the expence of a husband, hussy, in gaming,
drinking, and whoring? Have you money enough to carry
on the daily quarrels of man and wife about who shall
squander most? There are not many husbands and wives
who can bear the charges of plaguing one another in a
handsome way. If you must be married, could you in-
troduce nobody into our family but a highwayman?
Why, thou foolish jade, thou wilt be as ill used, and
as much neglected, as it thou hadst married a lord!

Peach. Let not your anger, my dear, break through
the rules of decency, for the Captain looks upon him-
self in the military capacity as a gentleman by his pro-
fession. Besides what he hath already, I know he is in
a fair way of getting or of dying; and both these ways,
let me tell you, are most excellent chances for a wife.
Tell me, hussy, are you ruin'd or no?

Mrs. Peach. With Polly's fortune she might very well

have gone off to a person of distinction : yes, that you might, you pouting slut !

Peach. What ! is the wench dumb ? speak, or I'll make you plead by squeezing out an answer from you. Are you really bound wife to him, or are you only upon liking ? *[Pinches her.]*

Polly. Oh !

[Screaming]

Mrs. Peach. How the mother is to be pitied who hath handsome daughters ! Locks, bolts, bars, and lectures of morality, are nothing to them ; they break through them all : they have as much pleasure in cheating a father and mother as in cheating at cards.

Peach. Why, Polly, I shall soon know if you are married by Macheath's keeping from our house.

AIR VIII. *Grim king of the Ghosts, &c.*

Polly. Can love be controll'd by advice ?

Will Cupid our mothers obey ?

Tho' my heart were as frozen as ice,
At his flame 'twould have melted away.

When he kiss me, so sweetly he prest,
'Twas so sweet, that I must have comply'd,
So I thought it both safest and best
To marry for fear you should chide.

Mrs. Peach. Then all the hopes of our family are gone for ever and ever !

Peach. And Macheath may hang his father and mother in law, in hopes to get into their daughter's fortune.

Polly. I did not marry him, 'as 'tis the fashion) coolly and deliberately for honour or money—but I love him.

Mrs. Peach. Love him ! worse and worse ! I thought the girl had been better bred. Oh, husband, husband, her folly makes me mad ! my head swims, I'm distracted ! I can't support myself—Oh ! *[Faints.]*

Peach. See, wench, to what a condition you have reduced your poor mother ! A glass of cordial this instant. How the poor woman takes it to heart !——*Polly goes out and returns with it.*——Ah, hussy, now this is the only comfort your mother has left.

Polly. Give her another glass, Sir : my mamma drinks double the quantity whenever she is out of order. This you see fetches her.

Mrs. Peach. The girl shews such readiness, and so much concern, that I almost could find in my heart to forgive her.

AIR IX. O Jenny, O Jenny, where hast thou been?
O Polly, you might have toy'd and kist;
By keeping men off you keep them on.

Polly. But he so teaz'd me,
And he so pleas'd me,

What I did you must have done.

Mrs. Peach. Not with a highwayman—you sorry slut!

Peach. A word with you, wife. 'Tis no new thing for a wench to take man without consent of parents. You know 'tis the frailty of woman, my dear.

Mrs. Peach. Yes, indeed, the sex is frail; but the first time a woman is frail she should be somewhat nice methinks, for then or never is her time to make her fortune; after that she hath nothing to do but to guard herself from being found out, and she may do what she pleases.

Peach. Make yourself a little easy; I have a thought shall soon set all matters again to rights. Why so melancholy, Polly? since what is done cannot be undone, we must all endeavour to make the best of it.

Mrs. Peach. Well, Polly, as far as one woman can forgive another, I forgive thee. Your father is too fond of you, hussy.

Polly. Then all my sorrows are at an end.

Mrs. Peach. A mighty likely speech in troth for a wench who is just married!

AIR X. Thomas, I cannot, &c.

Polly. I, like a ship in storms, was tost,
Yet afraid to put into land,
For seiz'd in the port the vessel's lost
Whose treasure is contraband.

The waves are laid,
My duty's paid;

O joy beyond expression!

Thus safe ashore

I ask no more;

My all's in my possession.

Peach. I hear customers in t'other room; go talk with them, Polly, but come again as soon as they are gone. But hark ye, child, if 'tis the gentleman who was here yesterday about the repeating watch, say you believe we can't get intelligenc' of it till to-morrow; for I lent it to Sukey Straddle to make a figure with to night at a tavern in Drury-lane. If t'other gentleman calls for the

silver-hilted sword, you know beetle-browed Jeremy hath it on, and he doth not come from Tunbridge, till Tuesday night, so that it cannot be had till then. [*Exit Polly.*] Dear wife, be a little pacified; don't let your passion run away with your senses: Polly, I grant you, hath done a rash thing.

Mrs. Peach. If she had had only an intrigue with the fellow, why the very best families have excused and huddled up a frailty of that sort. 'Tis marriage, husband, that makes it a blemish.

Peach. But money, wife, is the true fuller's earth for reputations; there is not a spot or a stain but what it can take out. A rich rogue now-a-days is fit company for any gentleman; and the world, my dear, hath not such a contempt for roguery as you imagine. I tell you, wife, I can make this match turn to our advantage.

Mrs. Peach. I am very sensible, husband, that Captain Macheath is worth money, but I am in doubt whether he hath not two or three wives already, and then if he should die in a session or two, Polly's dower would come into dispute.

Peach. That, indeed, is a point which ought to be considered.

-AIR XI. *A soldier and sailor.*

A fox may steal your hens, Sir,
A whore your health and pence, Sir,
Your daughter rob your chest, Sir,
Your wife may steal your rest, Sir,
A thief your goods and plate;
But this is all but picking,
With rest, peace, chest, and chicken:
It ever was decreed, Sir,
If lawyer's hand is sec'd, Sir,
He steals your whole estate.

The lawyers are bitter enemies to those in our way; they don't care that any body should get a clandestine livelihood but themselves.

Enter Polly.

Polly. 'Twas only Nimming Ned; he brought in a damask window-curtain, a hoop-petticoat, a pair of silver candlesticks, a periwig, and one silk stocking, from the fire that happened last night.

Peach. There is not a fellow that is cleverer in his way, and saves more goods out of the fire, than Ned.

But now, Polly, to your affair; for matters must not be as they are. You are married, then, it seems?

Polly. Yes, Sir.

Peach. And how do you propose to live, child?

Polly. Like other women, Sir; upon the industry of my husband.

Mrs. Peach. What! is the wench turned fool? A highwayman's wife, like a soldier's, hath as little of his pay as of his company.

Peach. And had not you the common views of a gentlewoman in your marriage, Polly?

Polly. I don't know what you mean, Sir.

Peach. Of a jointure, and of being a widow.

Polly. But I love him, Sir; how then could I have thoughts of parting with him?

Peach. Parting with him! why that is the whole scheme and intention of all marriage articles. The comfortable estate of widowhood is the only hope that keeps up a wife's spirits. Where is the woman who would scruple to be a wife if she had it in her power to be a widow whenever she pleased? If you have any views of this sort, Polly, I shall think the match not so very unreasonable.

Polly. How I dread to hear your advice! yet I must beg you to explain yourself.

Peach. Secure what he hath got, have him peached the next sessions, and then at once you are made a rich widow.

Polly. What! murder the man I love! The blood runs cold at my heart with the very thought of it!

Peach. Fie, Polly! what hath murder to do in the affair? Since the thing sooner or later must happen, I dare say the captain himself would like that we should get the reward for his death sooner than a stranger. Why, Polly, the captain knows that 'tis his employment to rob, so 'tis ours to take robbers; every man in his business; so that there is no malice in the case.

Mrs. Peach. Aye, husband, now you have nicked the matter. To have him peached is the only thing could ever make me forgive her.

AIR XII. *Now ponder well, ye parents dear.*

Polly. Oh ponder well! be not severe;

So save a wretched wife,

For on the rope that hangs my dear

Depends poor Polly's life.

Mrs. Peach. But your duty to your parents, hussy, obliges you to hang him. What would many a wife give for such an opportunity?

Polly. What is a jointure, what is widowhood, to me! I know my heart; I cannot survive him.

AIR XIII. *Le printemps rappelle aux armes.*

The turtle thus with plaintive crying,

Her lover dying,

The turtle thus with plaintive crying

Laments her dove;

Down she drops quite spent with sighing,

Pair'd in death as pair'd in love.

Thus, Sir, it will happen to your poor Polly.

Mrs. Peach. What! is the fool in love in earnest then? I hate thee for being particular. Why, wench, thou art a shame to thy very sex.

Polly. But hear me, mother. If you ever loved—

Mrs. Peach. Those cursed play-books she reads have been her ruin. One word more, hussy, and I shall knock your brains out, if you have any.

Peach. Keep out of the way, Polly, for fear of mischief; and consider of what is proposed to you.

Mrs. Peach. Away, hussy. Hang your husband, and be dutiful. [*Polly listening.*] The thing, husband, must and shall be done. For the sake of intelligence we must take other measures, and have him peached the next sessions without her consent. If she will not know her duty, we know ours.

Peach. But really, my dear, it grieves one's heart to take off a great man. When I consider his personal bravery, his fine stratagems, how much we have already got by him, and how much more we may get, methinks I can't find in my heart to have a hand in his death: I wish you could have made Polly undertake it.

Mrs. Peach. But in a case of necessity—our own lives are in danger.

Peach. Then indeed we must comply with the customs of the world, and make gratitude give way to interest.—He shall be taken off.

Mrs. Peach. I'll undertake to manage Polly.

Peach. And I'll prepare matters for the Old Bailey.

[*Exeunt Peachum and Mrs. Peachum.*]

Polly. Now I'm a wretch indeed!—Methinks I see him already in the cart, sweeter and more lovely than

the nosegay in his hand!—I hear the crowd extolling his resolution and intrepidity!—What volleys of sighs are sent from the windows of Holborn, that so comely a youth should be brought to disgrace!—I see him at the tree—the whole circle are in tears—even butchers weep!—Jack Ketch himself hesitates to perform his duty, and would be glad to lose his fee by a reprieve! What then will become of Polly?—As yet I may inform him of their design, and aid him in his escape.—It shall be so.—But then he flies, absents himself, and I bar myself from his dear, dear conversation! that too will distract me.—If he keeps out of the way, my papa and mamma may in time relent, and we may be happy.—If he stays, he is hanged, and then he is lost for ever!—He intended to lie concealed in my room till the dusk of the evening. If they are abroad, I'll this instant let him out, lest some accident should prevent him.

[Exit, and returns with Macheath.]

AIR IX. *Pretty parrot, say, &c.*

Macb. Pretty Polly say,

When I was away

Did your fancy never stray

To some newer lover?

Polly. Without disguise,

Heaving sighs,

Doating eyes,

My constant heart discover,

Fondly let me loll,

Mac. O pretty, pretty Poll.

Polly. And are you as fond of me as ever, my dear?

Mac. Suspect my honour, my courage, suspect any thing but my love. May my pistols miss fire, and my mare slip her shoulder while I am pursued, if ever I forsake thee!

Polly. Nay, my dear, I have no reason to doubt you, for I find in the romance you lent me, none of the great heroes were ever false in love.

AIR XV. *Pray fair one be kind.*

Mac. My heart was so free,

It rovd like the bee,

'Till Polly my passion requited;

I sipp'd each flower,

I chang'd ev'ry hour,

But here ev'ry flow'r is united.

18 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Polly. Were you sentenc'd to transportation, sure, my dear, you could not leave me behind you—Could you?

Mac. Is there any power, any force, that could tear me from thee? You might sooner tear a pension out of the hands of a courtier, a fee from a lawyer, a pretty woman from a looking-glass, or any woman from quadrille—But to tear me from thee is impossible!

AIR XVI. *Over the hills and far away.*

Mac. Were I laid on Greenland's coast,
And in my arms embrac'd my lass,
Warm amidst eternal frost,

Too soon the half year's night would pass;

Polly. Were I sold on Indian soil,
Soon as the burning day was clos'd,
I could mock the sultry toil

When on my charmer's breast repos'd.

Mac. And I would love you all the day,

Polly. Ev'ry night would kiss and play,

Mac. If with me you'd fondly stray,

Polly. Over the hills and far away.

Polly. Yes, I would go with thee. But oh!—how shall I speak it? I must be torn from thee. We must part.

Mac. How! part!

Polly. We must, we must! My papa and mama are set against thy life: they now, even now, are in search after thee: they are preparing evidence against thee: thy life depends upon a moment.

AIR XVII. *Gin thou wert my own thing.*

Polly. O what pain it is to part!

Can I leave thee, can I leave thee?

O what pain it is to part!

Can thy Polly ever leave thee?

But lest death my love should thwart,

And bring thee to the fatal cart,

Thus I tear thee from my bleeding heart!

Fly hence, and let me leave thee.

One kiss, and then—one kiss—Be gone—Farewel!

Mac. My hand, my heart, my dear, is so rivetted to thine, that I cannot unloose my hold.

Polly. But my papa may intercept thee, and then I should loose the very glimmering of hope. A few weeks perhaps may reconcile us all. Shall thy Polly hear from thee?

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 19

Mac. Must I then go?

Poly. And will not absence change your love?

Mac. If you doubt it let me stay—and be hang'd.

Poly. O how I fear! how I tremble! —Go—but when safety will give you leave, you will be sure to see me again, for till then *Poly* is wretched.

AIR XVIII. *O the broom, &c.*

[*Parting, and looking back at each other with fondness, he at one door, she at the other.*]

Mac. The miser thus a shilling fees

Which he's obliged to pay,

With sighs resigns it by degrees,

And tears 'tis gone for aye.

Polly. The boy thus, when his sparrow's flown,

The bird in silence eyes,

But soon as out of sight 'tis gone,

Whins, whimpers, sobs, and cries. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE, a Tavern near Newgate.

Jemmy Twitcher, Crookfinger'd Jack, Wat. Dreary, Robin of Bagshot, Nimming Ned, Harry Paddington, Mat of the Mint, Ben Budge, and the rest of the gang, at the table with wine, brandy, and tobacco.

Ben. BUT prithee *Mat.* what is become of thy brother *Tom*? I have not seen him since my return from transportation.

Mat. Poor brother *Tom* had an accident this time twelvemonth, and so clever made a fellow he was that I could not save him from these stealing rascals the surgeons, and now poor man, he is among the otainys at Surgeon's-Hall.

Ben. So it seems his time was come.

Jem. But the present time is ours, and nobody alive hath more. Why are the laws levell'd at us? are we more dishonest than the rest of mankind? What we win, gentlemen, is our own by the law of arms and the right of conquest.

Crook. Where shall we find such another set of practical philosophers, who to a man are above the fear of death?

Wat. Sound men and true!

Robin. Of tried courage and indefatigable industry!

20 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Ned. Who is there here that would not die for his friend?

Harry. Who is there here who would betray him for his interest?

Mat. Shew me a gang of courtiers that can say as much.

Ben. We are for a just partition of the world, for every man hath a right to enjoy life.

Mat. We retrench the superfluities of mankind. The world is avaricious, and I hate avarice. A covetous fellow, like a jackdaw, steals what he was never made to enjoy for the sake of hiding it. These are the robbers of mankind; for money was made for the freehearted and generous; and where is the injury of taking from another what he hath not the heart to make use of?

Jem. Our several stations for the day are fixed. Good luck attend us all. Fill the glasses.

AIR XIX. *Fill ev'ry glass, &c.*

Mat. Fill ev'ry glass, for wine inspires us
And fires us

With courage, love, and joy.

Women and wine should life employ;

Is there ought else on earth desirous?

Chorus. Fill every glass, &c.

Enter Macheath.

Mac. Gentlemen, well met; my heart hath been with you this hour, but an unexpected affair hath detained me. No ceremony I beg you.

Mat. We were just breaking up to go upon duty. Am I to have the honour of taking the air with you, Sir, this evening upon the Heath? I drink a dram now and then with the stage-coachmen in the way of friendship and intelligence, and I know that about this time there will be passengers upon the western road who are worth speaking with.

Mac. I was to have been of that party—but——

Mat. But what, Sir?

Mac. Is there any one who suspects my courage?

Mat. We have all been witnesses of it.

Mac. My honour and truth to the gang?

Mat. I'll be answerable for it.

Mac. In the division of our booty have I ever shewn the least marks of avarice or injustice?

Mat. By these questions something seems to have ruffled you. Are any of us suspected?

Mac. I have a fixed confidence, gentlemen, in you all as men of honour, and as such I value and respect you. Peachum is a man that is useful to us.

Mat. Is he about to play us any foul play? I'll shoot him through the head.

Mac. I beg you, gentlemen, act with conduct and discretion. A pistol is your last resort.

Mat. He knows nothing of this meeting.

Mac. Business cannot go on without him: he is a man who knows the world, and is a necessary agent to us. We have had a slight difference, and till it is accommodated I shall be obliged to keep out of the way. Any private dispute of mine shall be of no ill consequence to my friends. You must continue to act under his direction, for the moment we break loose from him our gang is ruined.

Mat. As a bawd to a whore, I grant you, he is to us of great convenience.

Mac. Make him believe I have quitted the gang, which I can never do but with life. At our private quarters I will continue to meet you. A week or so will probably reconcile us.

Mat. Your instructions shall be observed. 'Tis now high time for us to repair to our several duties; so till the evening, at our quarters in Moorfields, we bid you farewell.

Mac. I shall wish myself with you. Success attend you.

[Sits down melancholy at the table.]

AIR XX. *March in Rinaldo with drums and trumpets.*

Mat. Let us take the road,

Hark! I hear the sound of coaches,

The hour of attack approaches,

To your arms, brave boys, and load.

See the ball I hold!

Let the chymists toil like asses,

Our fire their fire-surpasses,

And turns all out lead to gold.

[The gang, ranged in the front of the stage, load their pistols, and stick them under their girdles, then go off singing the first part in chorus.]

Mac. What a fool is a fond wench! Polly is most

confoundedly bit. I love the sex, and a man who loves money might as well be contented with one guinea as I with one woman. The Town, perhaps, hath been as much obliged to me for recruiting it with freehearted ladies as to any recruiting officer in the army. If it were not for us and the other gentlemen of the sword, Drury-lane would be uninhabited.

AIR XXI. *Would you have a young virgin, &c.*

If the heart of a man is depress'd with cares,
The mist is dispell'd when a woman appears;
Like the notes of a fiddle she sweetly, sweetly
Raises the spirits and charms our ears.
Roses and lilies her cheeks disclose,
But her ripe lips are more sweet than those;

Press her,

Care of her;

With blisses

Her kisses

— Dissolve us in pleasure and soft repose.

I must have women: there is nothing unbends the mind like them: money is not so strong a cordial for the time
— Drawer,

Enter Drawer.

is the porter gone for all the ladies, according to my directions?

Draw. I expect him back every minute; but you know, Sir, you sent him as far as Hockley-in-the-Hole for three of the ladies, for one in Vinegar-yard, and for the rest of them somewhere about Lewkner's-lane. Sure some of them are below, for I hear the bar bell. As they come I will shew them up. Coming, coming!
[Exit.]

Enter Mrs. Coaxer, Dolly Trull, Mrs. Vixen, Betty Doxy, Jenny Diver, Mrs. Slammerkin, Sukey Tawdry, and Molly Brazen.

Mac. Dear Mrs. Coaxer, you are welcome; you look charmingly to day: I hope you don't want the repairs of quality, and lay on paint. Dolly Trull, kiss me, you flut, are you as amorous as ever; hussy? you are always so taken up with stealing hearts, that you don't allow yourself time to steal any thing else; ah, Dolly, thou wilt ever be a coquette. Mrs. Vixen, I'm yours; I always loved a woman of wit and spirit; they make charming mistresses but plaguy wives. Bet-

ty. Doxy, come hither, huffey; do you drink as hard as ever? you had better stick to good wholesome beer, for in troth, Betty, strong waters will in time ruin your constitution: you should leave those to your betters. What, and my pretty Jenny Diver too, as prim and demure as ever; there is not any prude, though ever so high bred; hath a more sanctified look with a more mischievous heart: ah, thou art a dear, artful hypocrite! Mrs. Slammerkin, as careless and genteel as ever: all you fine ladies who know your own beauty affect an undress. But see, here's Sukey Tawdry come to contradict what I was saying; every thing she gets one way she lays out upon her back: why, Sukey, you must keep at least a dozen tallymen. Molly Brazen. [*She kisses him.*] But hark! I hear music. Ere you seat yourselves, ladies, what think you of a dance? Come in.

Enter Harper.

Play the French tune that Mrs. Slammerkin was so fond of.

AIR XXII. *Cotillon.*

Youth's the season made for joys.

Love is then our duty;

She alone who that employs

Well deserves her beauty.

Let's be gay

While we may,

Beauty's a flow'r despis'd in decay.

Chorus. Youth's the season, &c.

Let us drink and sport to-day,

Ours is not to-morrow;

Love with youth flies swift away,

Age is nought but sorrow.

Dance and sing,

Time's on the wing,

Life never knows the return of spring.

Chorus. Let us drink, &c.

Mac. Now pray, ladies, take your places. Here, fellow. [*Pays the harper.*] Bid the drawer bring us more wine. [*Exit harper.*] If any of the ladies chuse gin, I hope they will be so free as to call for it.

Jenny. You look as if you meant me. Wine is strong enough for me. Indeed, Sir, I never drink strong waters but when I have the colic.

Mac. Just the excuse of the fine ladies. Why, a lady of quality is never without the colic. I hope, Mrs. Coaxer, you have had good success of late in your visits among the mercers.

Coax. We have so many interlopers; yet with industry one may still have a little picking. I carried a silver-flowered lustring and a piece of black padefoy to Mr. Peachum's lock but last week.

Fix. There's Molly Brazen hath the ogle of a rattlesnake; she riveted a linen-draper's eye so fast upon her, that he was nicked of three pieces of cambrick before he could look off.

Braz. Oh, dear madam! But sure nothing can come up to your handling of laces; and then you have such a sweet deluding tongue. To cheat a man is nothing; but the woman must have fine parts indeed who cheats a woman.

Fix. Lace, Madam, lies in a small compass, and is of easy conveyance. But you are apt, Madam, to think too well of your friends.

Coax. If any woman hath more art than another, to be sure 'tis Jenny Diver; though her fellow be never so agreeable, she can pick his pocket as coolly as if money were her only pleasure. Now that is a command of the passions uncommon in a woman.

Jenny. I never go to the tavern with a man but in the view of business. I have other hours, and other sort of men for my pleasure; but had I your address, Madam—

Mac. Have done with your compliments, ladies, and drink about. You are not so fond of me, Jenny, as you used to be.

Jenny. 'Tis not convenient, Sir, to show my fondness among so many rivals. 'Tis your own choice, and not the warmth of my inclination, that will determine you.

AIR XXIII. *All in a misty morning.*

Before the barn door crowing,

The cock by hens attended,

His eyes around him throwing,

Stands for a while suspended;

Then one he singles from the crew,

And cheers the happy hen,

With how do you do, and how do you do,

And how do you do again?

Mac. Ah, Jenny! thou art a dear slut.

Trull. Pray, Madam, were you ever in keeping?

Tawd. I hope, Madam, I ha'n't been so long upon the town, but I have met with some good fortune as well as my neighbours.

Trull. Pardon me, Madam, I meant no harm by the question; 'twas only in the way of conversation.

Tawd. Indeed, Madam, if I had not been a fool, I might have lived very handsomely with my last friend: but upon his missing five guineas, he turned me off. Now I never suspected he had counted them.

Slam. Who do you look upon, Madam, as your best sort of keepers?

Trull. That, Madam, is thereafter as they be.

Slam. I, Madam, was once kept by a Jew; and, bating their religion, to women they are a good sort of people.

Tawd. Now for my part I own I like an old fellow, for we always make them pay for what they can't do.

Vix. A spruce 'prentice, let me tell you, ladies, is no ill thing; they bleed freely: I have sent at least two or three dozen of them in my time to the plantations.

Jen. But to be sure, Sir, with so much good fortune as you have had upon the road, you must be grown immensely rich.

Mac. The road indeed hath done me justice, but the gaming-table hath been my ruin.

AIR XXIV. *When once I lay with another man's wife, &c.*

Jenny. The gamblers and lawyers are jugglers alike,

If they meddle, your all is in danger;

Like gipties, if once they can finger a fouse,

Your pockets they pick, and they pilfer your house,

And give your estate to a stranger.

A man of courage should never put any thing to the risk but his life. These are the tools of a man of honour: cards and dice are only fit for cowardly cheats who prey upon their friends.

[*She takes up his pistol, Tawdry takes up the other.*]

Tawd. This, Sir, is fitter for your hand. Besides your loss of money, 'tis a loss to the ladies. Gaming takes you off from women. How fond could I be of you! but before company 'tis ill bred.

26 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Mac. Wanton huffies !

Jenny. I must and will have a kiss to give my wine a zest.

[They take him about the neck, and make signs to Peachum and Constables, who rush in upon him.]

Peach. I seize you, Sir, as my prisoner.

Mac. Was this well done, Jenny ? Women are decoy ducks ; who can trust them ? beasts, jades, jilts, harpies, furies, whores !

Peach. Your case, Mr. Macheath, is not particular. The greatest heroes have been ruined by women. But to do them justice, I must own they are a pretty sort of creatures if we could trust them. You must now, Sir, take your leave of the ladies ; and if they have a mind to make you a visit, they will be sure to find you at home. This gentleman, ladies, lodges in Newgate. Constables, wait upon the Captain to his lodgings.

AIR XXV. *When first I laid siege to my Chloris.*

Mac. At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure,
At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure,
Let me go where I will,
In all kinds of ill,

I shall find no such furies as these are.

Peach. Ladies, I'll take care the reckoning shall be discharged.

[Exit Macheath guarded, with Peachum and Constables ; the women remain.]

Fix. Look ye, Mrs. Jenny, though Mr. Peachum may have made a private bargain with you and Sukey Tawdry for betraying the Captain, as we were all assisting, we ought all to share alike.

Coax. I think Mr. Peachum, after so long an acquaintance, might have trusted me as well as Jenny Diver.

Slam. I am sure at least three men of his hanging, and in a year's time too, (if he did me justice) should be set down to my account.

Trull. Mrs. Slammerkin, that is not fair, for you know one of them was taken in bed with me.

Jen. As far as a bowl of punch or a treat, I believe Mrs. Suky will join with me : as for any thing else, ladies, you cannot in conscience expect it.

Slam. Dear Madam——

Trull. I would not for the world——

Slam. 'Tis impossible for me——

Trull. As I hope to be saved, Madam——

Slam. Nay then I must stay here all night——

Trull. Since you command me.

[*Exeunt, with great ceremony.*]

SCENE, Newgate.

Enter Lockit, Turnkeys, Macheath, and Constables.

Lock. Noble Captain, you are welcome; you have not been a lodger of mine this year and half. You know the custom, Sir: garnish, Captain, garnish. Hand me down those fetters there.

Mac. Those, Mr. Lockit, seem to be the heaviest of the whole set. With your leave I should like the further pair better.

Lock. Look ye, Captain, we know what is fittest for our prisoners. When a gentleman uses me with civility, I always do the best I can to please him. Hand them down, I say. We have them of all prices, from one guinea to ten; and 'tis fitting every gentleman should please himself.

Mac. I understand you, Sir [*Gives money.*] The fees here are so many and so exorbitant, that few fortunes can bear the expence of getting off handsomely, or of dying like a gentleman.

Lock. Those I see will fit the Captain better. Take down the further pair. Do but examine them, Sir. Never was better work. How genteely they are made! They will sit as easy as a glove, and the nicest man in England might not be ashamed to wear them. [*He puts on the chains.*] If I had the best gentleman in the land in my custody, I could not equip him more handsomely. And so, Sir, I now leave you to your private meditations.

[*Exeunt Lockit, Turnkeys, and Constables.*]

AIR XXVI. *Courtiers, courtiers think it no harm.*

Mac. Man may escape from rope and gun,

Nay, some have outliv'd the doctor's pill;

Who takes a woman must be undone,

That basilisk is sure to kill.

The fly that sips treacle is lost in the sweets,

So he that tastes woman, woman, woman,

He that tastes woman, ruin meets.

To what a woful plight have I brought myself! Here

must I (all day long till I am hanged) be confined to hear the reproaches of a wench who lays her ruin at my door. I am in the custody of her father, and to be sure if he knows of the matter, I shall have a fine time on't betwixt this and my execution. But I promised the wench marriage.—What signifies a promise to a woman? does not man in marriage itself promise a hundred things that he never means to perform? Do all we can, women will believe us; for they look upon a promise as an excuse for following their own inclinations.—But here comes Lucy, and I cannot get from her—Would I were deaf!

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. You base man, you!—how can you look me in the face after what hath passed between us?—See here, perfidious wretch! how am I forced to bear about the load of infamy you have laid upon me.—Oh, Mac-heath! thou hast robbed me of my quiet—to see thee tortured would give me pleasure.

AIR XXVII. *A lovely lass to a friar came.*

Thus when a good housewife sees a rat

In her trap in the morning taken,

With pleasure her heart goes pit a pat,

In revenge for her loss of bacon.

Then she throws him

To the dog or cat,

To be worried, crush'd, and shaken.

Mac. Have you no bowels, no tenderness, my dear Lucy, to see a husband in these circumstances?

Lucy. A husband!

Mac. In every respect but the form; and that, my dear, may be said over us at any time. Friends should not insist upon ceremonies. From a man of honour, his word is as good as his bond.

Lucy. 'Tis the pleasure of all you fine men to insult the women you have ruined.

AIR XXVIII. *'Twas when the seas were roaring.*

How cruel are the traitors,

Who lie and swear in jest,

To cheat unguarded creatures

Of virtue, fame, and rest!

Whoever steals a shilling,

Thro' shame the guilt conceals;

In love the perjur'd villain
With boast the theft reveals.

Mac. The very first opportunity, my dear, (but have patience) you shall be my wife in whatever manner you please.

Lucy. Insinuating monster! and so you think I know nothing of the affair of Miss Polly Peachum?—I could tear thy eyes out!

Mac. Sure, Lucy, you can't be such a fool as to be jealous of Polly?

Lucy. Are you not married to her, you brute you?

Mac. Married! very good. The wench gives it out only to vex thee, and to ruin me in thy good opinion. 'Tis true I go to the house, I chat with the girl, I kiss her, I say a thousand things to her (as all gentlemen do) that mean nothing, to divert myself; and now the silly jade hath set it about that I am married to her, to let me know what she would be at. Indeed, my dear Lucy, these violent passions may be of ill consequence to a woman in your condition.

Lucy. Come, come, Captain, for all your assurance, you know that Miss Polly hath put it out of your power to do me the justice you promised me.

Mac. A jealous woman believes every thing her passion suggests. To convince you of my sincerity, if we can find the Ordinary, I shall have no scruples of making you my wife; and I know the consequence of having two at a time.

Lucy. That you are only to be hanged, and so get rid of them both.

Mac. I am ready, my dear Lucy, to give you satisfaction—if you think there is any in marriage.—What can a man of honour say more?

Lucy. So then it seems you are not married to Miss Polly?

Mac. You know, Lucy, the girl is prodigiously conceited: no man can say a civil thing to her, but (like other fine ladies) her vanity makes her think he's her own for ever and ever.

AIR XXIX. *The Sun had loo'd his weary teams.*

The first time at the looking-glass

The mother sets her daughter,

The image strikes the smiling lass

With self-love ever after:

Each time she looks, she fonder grown,
 Thinks every charm grows stronger;
 But alas, vain maid! all eyes but your own
 Can see you are not younger.

When women consider their own beauties, they are all alike unreasonable in their demands, for they expect their lovers should like them as long as they like themselves.

Lucy. Yonder is my father—Perhaps this way we may light upon the Ordinary, who shall try if you will be as good as your word—for I long to be made an honest woman, [Exeunt.

Enter Peachum and Lockit with an Account-book.

Lock. In this last affair, brother Peachum, we are agreed. You have consented to go halves in Macheath's.

Peach. We shall never fall out about an execution,—But as to that article, pray how stands our last year's account?

Lock. If you will run your eye over it, you'll find 'tis fair and clearly stated.

Peach. This long arrear of the government is very hard upon us. Can it be expected that we should hang our acquaintance for nothing, when our betters will hardly save theirs without being paid for it? Unless the people in employment, pay better, I promise them for the future, I shall let other rogues live besides their own.

Lock. Perhaps, brother, they are afraid these matters may be carried too far. We are treated too by them with contempt, as if our profession were not reputable.

Peach. In one respect indeed our employment may be reckoned dishonest, because, like great statesmen, we encourage those who betray their friends.

Lock. Such language, brother, any where else might turn to your prejudice. Learn to be more guarded, I beg you.

AIR XXX. *How happy are we, &c.*

When you censure the age,

Be cautious and sage,

Lest the courtiers offended should be;

If you mention vice or bribe,

'Tis so pat. to all the tribe,

Each cries—That was levell'd at me.

Peach. Here's poor Ned Clincher's name, I see; sure, brother Lockit, there was a little unfair proceeding in

Ned's case; for he told me in the condemned hold that, for value received, you had promised him a session or two longer without molestation.

Lock. Mr. Peachum—this is the first time my honour was ever called in question.

Peach. Business is at an end—if once we act dishonourably.

Lock. Who accuses me?

Peach. You are warm, brother.

Lock. He that attacks my honour, attacks my livelihood—and this usage—sir—is not to be borne.

Peach. Since you provoke me to speak—I must tell you too, that Mrs. Coaxer charges you with defrauding her of her information-money for the apprehending of Curtpated Hugh. Indeed, indeed, brother, we must punctually pay our spies, or we shall have no information.

Lock. Is this language to me, sirrah—who have sav'd you from the gallows, sirrah! [*Collaring each other.*]

Peach. If I am hang'd, it shall be for ridding the world of an arrant rascal.

Lock. This hand shall do the office of the halter you deserve, and throttle you—you dog!

Peach. Brother, brother—we are both in the wrong—we shall be both losers in the dispute—for you know we have it in our power to hang each other. You should not be so passionate.

Lock. Nor you so provoking.

Peach. 'Tis our mutual interest, 'tis for the interest of the world, we should agree. If I said any thing, brother, to the prejudice of your character, I ask pardon.

Lock. Brother Peachum—I can forgive as well as resent—Give me your hand: suspicion does not become a friend.

Peach. I only meant to give you occasion to justify yourself. But I must now step home, for I expect the gentleman about this snuff-box that Filch nimmed two nights ago in the Park. I appointed him at this hour.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Lucy.

Lock. Whence come you, hussy?

Lucy. My tears might answer that question.

Lock. You have then been whimpering and fondling like a spaniel over the fellow that hath abused you.

32 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Lucy. One can't help love ; one can't cure it. 'Tis not in my power to obey you and hate him.

Lock. Learn to bear your husband's death like a reasonable woman : 'tis not the fashion now-a-days so much as to affect sorrow upon these occasions. No woman would ever marry, if she had not the chance of mortality for a release. Act like a woman of spirit, hussy, and thank your father for what he is doing.

AIR XXXI. *Of a noble race was Shenkin.*

Lucy. Is then his fate decreed, Sir,
Such a man can I think of quitting?
When first we met, so moves me yet,
O see how my heart is splitting!

Lock. Look ye, Lucy—there is no saving him—so I think you must even do like other widows—buy yourself weeds, and be cheerful.

AIR XXXII.

You'll think, ere many days ensue,
This sentence not severe ;
I hang your husband, child, 'tis true,
But with him hang your care.

Twang dang dillo dee.

Like a good wife, 'go moan over your dying husband ; that, child, is your duty.—Consider, girl, you can't have the man and the money too—so make yourself as easy as you can by getting all you can from him. [*Exit.*

Enter Macheath.

Lucy. Though the Ordinary was out of the way to-day, I hope, my dear, you will, upon the first opportunity, quiet my scruples—Oh, Sir! my father's hard heart is not to be softened, and I am in the utmost despair.

Mac. But if I could raise a small sum—would not twenty guineas, think you, move him?—Of all the arguments in the way of business, the perquisite is the most prevailing.—Your father's perquisites for the escape of prisoners must amount to a considerable sum in the year. Money well tim'd, and properly applied, will do any thing.

AIR XXXIII. *London ladies.*

If you at an office solicit your due,
And would not have matters neglected,
You must quicken the clerk with the perquisite too,
'To do what his duty directed.

Or would you the frowns of a lady prevent,

She too has this palpable failing,

The perquisite softens her into consent;

That reason with all is prevailing.

Lucy. What love or money can do, shall be done; for all my comfort depends upon your safety.

Enter Polly.

Polly. Where is my dear husband? Was a rope ever intended for this neck? Oh let me throw my arms about it, and throttle thee with love! Why dost thou turn away from me?—'tis thy Polly—'tis thy wife.

Mac. Was ever such an unfortunate rascal as I am!

Lucy. Was there ever such another villain!

Polly. Oh Macheath! was it for this we parted! Taken! imprisoned! tried! hanged!—Cruel reflection! I'll stay with thee till death—no force shall tear thy dear wife from thee now.—What means my love?—not one kind word! not one kind look!—Think what thy Polly suffers to see thee in this condition.

AIR XXXIV. *All in the downs, &c.*

Thus when the swallow, seeking prey,

Within the fast is closely pent,

His consort with bemoaning lay,

Without sits pining for th' event;

Her chatt'ring lovers all around her skim; [him.

She heeds them not (poor bird!) her sou.'s with

Mac. I must disown her. [*Aside.*] The wench is distracted!

Lucy. Am I then bilked of my virtue? can I have no reparation? Sure men were born to lie, and women to believe them! Oh villain! villain!

Polly. Am I not thy wife?—Thy neglect of me, thy aversion to me, too severely proves it.—Look on me—Tell me, am I not thy wife?

Lucy. Perfidious wretch!

Polly. Barbarous husband!

Lucy. Hadst thou been hang'd five months ago, I had been happy.

Polly. And I too.—If you had been-kind to me till death, it would not have vex'd me—and that's no very unreasonable request (though from a wife) to a man who hath not above seven or eight days to live.

14 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Lucy. Art thou then married to another? hast thou two wives, monster?

Mac. If women's tongues can cease for an answer—
hear me.

Lucy. I won't—Flesh and blood can't bear my usage.

Polly. Shall not I claim my own? Justice bids me speak.

AIR XXXV. *Have you heard of a frolicksome ditty.*

Mac. How happy could I be with either,

Were t'other dear charmer away;

But while ye thus teaze me together,

To neither a word will I say;

But toll de roll, &c.

Polly. Sure, my dear, there ought to be some preference shown to a wife; at least she may claim the appearance of it. He must be distracted with his misfortunes; or he could not use me thus.

Lucy. Oh villain! villain! thou hast deceived me. I could even inform against thee with pleasure. Not a prude wishes more heartily to have facts against her intimate acquaintance, than I now wish to have facts against thee. I would have her satisfaction, and they should all out.

AIR XXXVI. *Prisb trot,*

Polly. I'm bubbled.

Lucy. —I'm bubbled:

Polly. O how I am troubled!

Lucy. Bamboozled and bit!

Polly. —My distresses are doubled.

Lucy. When you come to the tree, should the hangman refuse,

These fingers, with pleasure, could fasten the noose.

Polly. I'm bubbled, &c.

Mac. Be pacified, my dear Lucy; this is all a fetch of Polly's to make me desperate with you in case I get off. If I am hanged, she would fain have the credit of being thought my widow. Really, Polly, this is no time for a dispute of this sort; for whenever you are talking of marriage, I am thinking of hanging.

Polly. And hast thou the heart to persist in disowning me?

Mac. And hast thou the heart to persist in persuading

me that I am married? Why, Polly, dost thou seek to aggravate my misfortunes?

Lucy. Really, Miss Peachum, you do but expose yourself: besides, 'tis barbarous in you to worry a gentleman in his circumstances.

AIR XXXVII.

Polly. Cease your funning,
Force or cunning,
Never shall my heart trepan;
All these fallies
Are but malice,
To seduce my constant man.
'Tis most certain,
By their flirting
Women oft have envy shewn;
Pleas'd to ruin
Others wooing,
Never happy in their own!

Decency, madam, methinks might teach you to behave yourself with some reserve with the husband, while his wife is present.

Mar. But seriously, Polly, this is carrying the joke a little too far.

Lucy. If you are determined, madam, to raise a disturbance in the prison, I shall be obliged to send for the Turnkey to shew you the door. I am sorry, madam, you force me to be so ill-bred.

Polly. Give me leave to tell you, madam, these forward airs don't become you in the least, madam; and my duty, madam, obliges me to stay with my husband, madam.

AIR XXXVIII. *Good morrow, gossip Joan.*

Lucy. Why, how now, Madam Flirt?

If you thus must chatter,
And are for flinging dirt,
Let's try who best can spatter,
Madam Flirt!

Polly. Why, how now, saucy jade?

Sure the wench is tipsy!
How can you see me made [To him.
The scoff of such a gipsy?
Saucy jade! [To her.

Enter Peachum.

Peach. Where's my wench! Ah hussy, hussy! Come you home, you slut; and when your fellow is hanged, hang yourself to make your family some amends.

Polly. Dear, dear father! do not tear me from him. I must speak; I have more to say to him. Oh, twist thy fetters about me, that he may not haul me from thee.

Peach. Sure all women are alike! if ever they commit one folly, they are sure to commit another by exposing themselves.—Away—not a word more. You are my prisoner now, hussy.

AIR XXXIX. *Irish bowl.*

Polly. No pow'r on earth can e'er divide
The knot that sacred love hath ty'd.
When parents draw against our mind
The truelove's knot they faster bind.

Oh, oh ray, oh Amborah—Oh, oh, &c.

[*Holding Macheath, Peachum pulling her. Exeunt Peachum and Polly.*]

Mac. I am naturally compassionate, wife, so that I could not use the wench as she deserved, which made you at first suspect there was something in what she said.

Lucy. Indeed, my dear, I was strangely puzzled.

Mac. If that had been the case, her father would never have brought me into this circumstance—No, Lucy—I had rather die than be false to thee.

Lucy. How happy am I if you say this from your heart! for I love thee so, that I could sooner bear to see thee hanged than in the arms of another.

Mac. But couldst thou bear to see me hanged?

Lucy. Oh Macheath! I can never live to see that day.

Mac. You see, Lucy, in the account of love you are in my debt; and you must now be convinced that I rather chuse to die than be another's—Make me, if possible, love thee more, and let me owe my life to thee—If you refuse to assist me, Peachum and your father will immediately put me beyond all means of escape.

Lucy. My father, I know, hath been drinking hard with the prisoners, and I fancy he is now taking his nap in his own room. If I can procure the keys, shall I go off with thee, my dear?

Mac. If we are together 'twill be impossible to lie concealed. As soon as the search begins to be a little cool, I will send to thee—till then my heart is thy prisoner.

Lucy. Come then, my dear husband—owe thy life to me—and though thou love me not—be grateful—
But that Polly runs in my head strangely.

Mac. A moment of time may make us unhappy for ever.

AIR XL. *The Last of Patie's Mill.*

Lucy. I like the fox shall grieve,
Whose mate hath left her side,
Whom hounds, from morn to eve,
Chase o'er the country wide.
Where can my lover hide?
Where cheat the wary pack?
If love be not his guide,
He never will come back! [Exit.

ACT III. SCENE, Newgate.

Lockit, Lucy.

Lockit.

TO be sure, wench, you must have been aiding and abetting to help him to this escape.

Lucy. Sir, here hath been Peachum and his daughter Polly, and to be sure they know the ways of Newgate as well as if they had been born and bred in the place all their lives! Why must all your suspicion light upon me?

Lock. Lucy, Lucy! I will have none of these shuffling answers.

Lucy. Well then—If I know any thing of him I wish I may be burnt.

Lock. Keep your temper, Lucy, or I shall pronounce you guilty.

Lucy. Keep your's, Sir—I do wish I may be burnt, I do—and what can I say more to convince you?

Lock. Did he tip handsomely?—how much did he come down with? Come, hussy, don't cheat your father, and I shall not be angry with you—Perhaps you have made a better bargain with him than I could have done—How much, my good girl?

Lucy. You know, Sir, I am fond of him, and would have given money to have kept him with me.

Lock. Ah Lucy! thy education might have put thee more upon thy guard; for a girl in the bar of an ale-house is always besieged.

38 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Lucy. Dear Sir, mention not my education—for 'twas to that I owe my ruin.

AIR XLI. *If love's a sweet passion, &c.*
When young at the bar you first taught me to score,
And bid me be free of my lips, and no more;
I was kiss'd by the parson, the squire, and the sot;
When the guest was departed the kiss was forgot;
But his kiss was so sweet, and so closely he prest,
That I languish'd and pin'd till I granted the rest.
If you can forgive me, Sir, I will make a fair confession;
for to be sure he hath been a barbarous villain to me.

Lock. And so you have let him escape, hussy—have you?

Lucy. When a woman loves, a kind look, a tender word, can persuade her to any thing—and I could ask no other bribe.

Lock. Thou wilt always be a vulgar slut, Lucy. If you would not be looked upon as a fool, you should never do any thing but upon the foot of interest: those that act otherwise are their own bubbles.

Lucy. But love, Sir, is a misfortune that may happen to the most discreet woman, and in love we are all fools alike—Notwithstanding all he swore, I am now fully convinced that Polly Peachum is actually his wife—Did I let him escape (fool that I was) to go to her?—Polly will wheedle herself into his money; and then Peachum will hang him and cheat us both.

Lock. So I am to be ruined, because forsooth you must be in love!—A very pretty excuse!

Lucy. I could murder that impudent happy strumpet, —I gave him his life, and that creature enjoys the sweets of it—Ungrateful Macheath!

AIR XLII. *South Sea Ballad.*

My love is all madness and folly;

Alone I lie,

Toss, tumble, and cry,

What a happy creature is Polly!

Was e'er such a wretch as I!

With rage I redden like scarlet

That my dear inconstant varlet,

Stark blind to my charms,

Is lost in the arms

Of that jilt, that inveigling harlot!

Stark blind to my charms,

Is lost in the arms

Of that jilt, that inveigling harlot!

This, this my resentment alarms.

Lock. And so, after all this mischief, I must stay here to be entertained with your caterwauling, Mistress Puss.—Out of my sight, wanton strumpet! you shall fast and mortify yourself into reason, with now and then a little handsome discipline to bring you to your senses.—Go. [*Exit Lucy.*] Peachum then intends to outwit me in this affair, but I'll be even with him.—The dog is leaky in his liquor, so I'll ply him that way, get the secret from him, and turn this affair to my own advantage. Peachum is my companion, my friend—According to the custom of the world, indeed, he may quote thousands of precedents for cheating me—and shall I not make use of the privilege of friendship to make him a return?

AIR XLIII. *Packington's pound.*

Thus gamesters united in friendship are found,

Though they know that their industry all is a cheat;

They flock to their prey at the dice-box's sound,

And join to promote one another's deceit:

But if by mishap

They fail of a chap,

To keep in their hands, they each other entrap;

Like pikes lank with hunger, who miss of their ends,

They bite their companions, and prey on their friends.

Now, Peachum, you and I, like honest tradesmen, are to have a fair trial which of us two can over-reach the other.—*Lucy*—[*Enter Lucy.*] are there any of Peachum's people now in the house?

Lucy. Filch, Sir, is drinking a quartern of strong waters in the next room with Black Moll.

Lock. Bid him come to me.

[*Exit Lucy.*]

Enter Filch.

Why, boy, thou lookest as if thou wert half starved; like a shotten herring. But, boy, canst thou tell me where thy master is to be found?

Filch. At his lock, Sir, at The Crooked Billet.

Lock. Very well—I have nothing more with you. [*Exit Filch.*] I'll go to him there, for I have many important affairs to settle with him, and in the way of those transactions I'll artfully get into his secret—so that

40 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

Macheath shall not remain a day longer out of my clutches. [Exit.]

SCENE, *A gaming-house.*

Macheath in a fine tarnished coat, Ben. Budge, Mat.
of the Mint.

Mac. I am sorry, gentlemen, the road was so barren of money. When my friends are in difficulties, I am always glad that my fortune can be serviceable to them. *[Gives them money.]* You see, gentlemen, I am not a mere court friend, who professes every thing and will do nothing.

AIR XLIV. *Lillibulero.*

The modes of the court so common are grown,

That a true friend can hardly be met;

Friendship for interest is but a loan,

Which they let out for what they can get.

'Tis true, you find

Some friends so kind,

Who will give you good counsel themselves to defend:

In sorrowful ditty,

They promise, they pity,

But shift you for money from friend to friend.

But we, gentlemen, have still honour enough to break through the corruptions of the world; and while I can serve you, you may command me.

Ben. It grieves my heart that so generous a man should be involved in such difficulties as oblige him to live with such ill company, and herd with gamesters.

Mat. See the partiality of mankind! one man may steal a horse better than another look over a hedge. Of all mechanics, of all servile handicraftsmen, a gamester is the vilest: but yet, as many of the quality are of the profession, he is admitted amongst the politest company. I wonder we are not more respected.

Mac. There will be deep play to-night at Marybone, and consequently money may be picked up upon the road. Meet me there, and I'll give you the hint who is worth setting.

Mat. The fellow with a brown coat with a narrow gold binding, I am told, is never without money.

Mac. What do you mean, Mat.? Sure you will not think of meddling with him! he's a good honest kind of a fellow, and one of us.

Ben. To be sure, Sir, we will put ourselves under your direction.

Mac. Have an eye upon the money-lenders—A rouleau or two would prove a pretty sort of an expedition. I hate extortion.

Mat. Those rouleaus are very pretty things—I hate your bank bills—there is such a hazard in putting them off.

Mac. There is a certain man of distinction, who in his time hath nicked me out of a great deal of the ready; he is in my cash, Ben. I'll point him out to you this evening, and you shall draw upon him for the debt.—The company are met; I hear the dicebox in the other room; so, gentlemen, your servant. You'll meet me at Marybone.

Mat. Upon honour.

SCENE, Peachum's lock.

A table with wine, brandy, pipes, and tobacco.

Peachum, Lockit.

Lock. The coronation-account, brother Peachum, is of so intricate a nature, that I believe it will never be settled.

Peach. It consists indeed of a great variety of articles—It was worth to our people, in fees of different kinds, above ten instalments.

Peach. But, brother, it is impossible for us now to enter upon this affair—we should have the whole day before us—Besides, the account of the last half year's plate is in a book by itself, which lies at the other office.

Lock. Today shall be for pleasure—tomorrow for business. Ah, brother, those daughters of ours are two slippery hussies—Keep a watchful eye upon Polly, and Macheath in a day or two shall be our own again.

AIR XLV. *Down in the North country.*

Lock. What gudgeons are we men!

Ev'ry woman's easy prey;

Tho' we have felt the hook, agen

We bite, and they betray.

The bird that hath been trap'd,

When he hears his calling mate,

To her he flies; again he's clapt

Within the wiry grate.

Peach. But what signifies catching the bird, if your daughter Lucy will set open the door of the cage?

Lock. If men were answerable for the follies and frailties of their wives and daughters, no friends could keep a good correspondence together for two days—This is

unkind of you, brother, for among good friends, what they say or do goes for nothing.

Enter Filch.

Scrw. Sir, here's Mrs. Diana Trapes wants to speak with you.

Peach. Shall we admit her, brother Lockit?

Lock. By all means—she's a good customer, and a fine spoken woman—and a woman who drinks and talks so freely will enliven the conversation.

Peach. Desire her to walk in.

[*Exit Filch.*]

Enter Mrs. Trapes.

Dear Mrs. Dye, your servant—one may know by your kifs that your gin is excellent.

Trapes. I was always very curious in my liquors.

Lock. There is no perfumed breath like it—I have been long acquainted with the flavour of those lips—ha'n't I, Mrs. Dye?

Trapes. Fill it up—I take as large draughts of liquor as I did of love—I hate a flincher in either.

AIR XLVI. *A shepherd kept sheep, &c.*

In the days of my youth I could bill like a dove, fa, la, la, &c.

Like a sparrow at all times was ready for love, fa, la, la, &c.

The life of all mortals in kissing should pass,

Lip to lip while we're young, then the lip to the glass, fa, la, &c.

But now, Mr. Peachum, to our business. If you have blacks of any kind brought in of late, mantuas—velvet scarfs—petticoats—let it be what it will—I am your chap—for all my ladies are very fond of mourning.

Peach. Why look ye, Mrs. Dye—you deal so hard with us, that we can afford to give the gentlemen who venture their lives for the goods little or nothing.

Trapes. The hard times oblige me to go very near in my dealing—To be sure, of late years I have been a great sufferer by the parliament—three thousand pounds would hardly make me amends—The act for destroying the Mint was a severe cut upon our business—till then, if a customer slept out of the way, we knew where to have her—No doubt you know Mrs. Coaxer—There's a wench now (till today) with a good suit of cloaths of mine upon her back, and I could never set eyes upon her for three months together—Since the act too

against imprisonment for small sums, my loss there too hath been very considerable; and it must be so, when a lady can borrow a handsome petticoat or a clean gown, and I not have the least bank upon her; and o' my conscience, now-a-days, most ladies takes delight in cheating when they can do it with safety.

Peach. Madam, you had a handsome gold watch of us t'other day for seven guineas—Considering we must have our profit—to a gentleman upon the road a gold watch will be scarce worth the taking.

Trapes. Consider, Mr. Peachum, that watch was remarkable, and not of very safe sale—If you have any black velvet scarfs—they are handsome winter wear, and take with most gentlemen who deal with my customers—'Tis I that put the ladies upon a good foot; 'tis not youth or beauty that fixes their price; the gentlemen always pay according to their dress, from half-a-crown to two guineas, and yet those hussies make nothing of bilking of me. Then too, allowing for accidents—I have eleven fine customers now down under the surgeon's hand—what with fees and other expences, there are great goings-out and no comings-in, and not a farthing to pay for at least a month's clothing—We run great risks—great risks, indeed.

Peach. As I remember you said something just now of Mrs. Coaxer.

Trapes. Yes, Sir; to be sure I stripped her of a suit of my own clothes about two hours ago, and have left her, as she should be, in her shift, with a lover of her's, at my house. She call'd him up stairs as he was going to Marybone in a hackney coach; and I hope, for her own sake and mine, she will persuade the captain to redeem her, for the captain is very generous to the ladies.

Lock. Wh' t captain?

Trapes. He thought I did not know him—an intimate acquaintance of your's, Mr. Peachum—only Captain Macheath—as fine as a lord.

Peach. Tomorrow, dear Mrs. Dye, you shall set your own price upon any of the goods you like—We have at least half a dozen velvet scarfs, and all at your service. Will you give me leave to make you a present of this suit of night-clothes for your own wearing? But are you sure it is Captain Macheath?

Trapes. Though he thinks I have forgot him, nobody

knows him better. I have taken a great deal of the captain's money in my time at second hand, for he always loved to have his ladies well drest.

Peach. Mr. Lockit and I have a little business with the captain—you understand me—and we will satisfy you for Mrs. Coaxer's debt.

Lo. Depend upon it—we will deal like men of honour.

Frap. I don't inquire after your affairs—so whatever happens I wash my hands on't—It hath always been my maxim, that one friend should assist another—But if you please, I'll take one of the scarfs home with me; 'tis always good to have something in hand. [*Ex.*

SCENE, Newgate.

Enter Lucy.

Jealousy, rage, love, and fear, are at once tearing me to pieces. How I am weatherbeaten and shattered with distresses!

AIR XLVII. *One evening having lost my way.*

I'm like a skiff on the ocean tost,

Now high, now low, with each billow borne,
With her rudder broke and her anchor lost,
Deserted and all forlorn.

While thus I lie rolling and tossing all night,
That Polly lies sporting on seas of delight!

Revenge, revenge, revenge,
Shall appease my restless sprite.

I have the ratsbane ready—I run no risk; for I can lay her death upon the gin, and so many die of that naturally, that I shall never be called in question—But say I were to be hanged—I never could be hanged for any thing that would give me greater comfort than the poisoning that slut.

Enter Filch.

Fil. Madam, here's Miss Polly come to wait upon you.

Lucy. Shew her in.

Enter Polly.

Dear madam, your servant. I hope you will pardon my passion when I was so happy to see you last—I was so over-run with the spleen, that I was perfectly out of myself; and, really, when one hath the spleen, every thing is to be excused by a friend.

AIR XLVIII. *Now, Roger, I'll tell thee, because
thou'rt my son,*

When a wife's in the pout,
(As she's sometimes, no doubt)

The good husband, as meek as a lamb,
 Her vapours to still,
 First grants her her will,
 And the quieting draught is a dram;
 Poor man! And the quieting draught is a dram.
 —I wish all our quarrels might have so comfortable a
 reconciliation.

Pol. I have no excuse for my own behaviour, madam,
 but my misfortunes—and really, madam, I suffer too
 upon your account.

Lucy. But, Miss Polly—in the way of friendship, will
 you give me leave to propose a glass of cordial to you?

Polly. Strong waters are apt to give me the head-ach.
 I hope, madam, you will excuse me.

Lucy. Not the greatest lady in the land could have
 better in her closet for her own private drinking—You
 seem mighty low in spirits, my dear?

Polly. I am sorry, madam, my health will not allow
 me to accept of your offer—I should not have left you in
 the rude manner I did when we met last, madam, had not
 my papa hauled me away so unexpectedly—I was indeed
 somewhat provoked, and perhaps might use some expres-
 sions that were disrespectful—but really, madam, the
 captain treated me with so much contempt and cruelty,
 that I deserved your pity rather than your resentment.

Lucy. But since his escape, no doubt all matters are
 made up again—Ah Polly, Polly! 'tis I am the unhappy
 wife, and he loves you as if you were only his mistress.

Polly. Sure, madam, you cannot think me so happy
 as to be the object of your jealousy—A man is always
 afraid of a woman who loves him too well—So that I
 must expect to be neglected and avoided.

Laby. Then our cases, my dear Polly! are exactly
 alike; both of us indeed have been too fond.

AIR XLIX. *O Bessy Bell, &c.*

Polly. A curse attends that woman's love,
 Who always would be pleasing.

Lucy. The pertness of the billing dove,
 Like tickling, is but teasing.

Polly. What then in love can woman do?

Lucy. If we grow fond they shun us.

Polly. And when we fly them, they pursue;

Lucy. But leave us when they've won us.

Lucy. Love is so very whimsical in both sexes, that it

46 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

is impossible to be lasting—but my heart is particular, and contradicts my own observation.

Polly. But really, Mistress Lucy, by his last behaviour, I think I ought to envy you—When I was forced from him he did not shew the least tenderness—but perhaps he hath a heart not capable of it.

AIR L. *Wou'd fate to me Belinda give.*

Among the men, coquettes we find,
Who court by turns all womankind;
And we grant all their hearts desir'd,
When they are flatter'd and admir'd.

The coquettes of both sexes are self-lovers, and that is a love no other whatever can dispossess. I fear, my dear Lucy, our husband is one of those.

Lucy. Away with these melancholy reflections—Indeed, my dear Polly, we are both of us a cup too low: let me prevail upon you to accept of my offer.

AIR LI. *Come, sweet lass.*

Come, sweet lass,
Let's banish sorrow
'Till to-morrow;
Come, sweet lass,
Let's take a chirping glass.
Wine can clear
The vapours of despair,
And make us light as air;
Then drink and banish care.

I can't bear, child, to see you in such low spirits—and I must persuade you to what I know will do you good—I shall now soon be even with the hypocritical strumpet. [*Aside.*]

[*Exit.*]

Polly. All this wheedling of Lucy can't be for nothing—at this time too, when I know she hates me!—The dissembling of a woman is always the forerunner of mischief—By pouring strong waters down my throat she thinks to pump some secrets out of me—I'll be upon my guard, and won't taste a drop of her liquor, I'm resolved.

Enter Lucy with strong waters.

Lucy. Come, Miss Polly.

Polly. Indeed, child, you have given yourself trouble to no purpose—You must, my dear, excuse me.

Lucy. Really, Miss Polly, you are as squeamishly affected about taking a cup of strong waters as a lady before company. I vow, Polly, I shall take it monstrously ill if you refuse me—Brandy and men (though women

love them never so well) are always taken by us with some reluctance—unless 'tis in private.

Polly. I protest, Madam, it goes against me—What do I see! Macheath again in custody!—now every glimmering of happiness is lost!

[Drops the glass of liquor on the ground.]

Lucy. Since things are thus, I'm glad the wench hath escap'd; for by this event 'tis plain she was not happy enough to deserve to be poison'd. *[Aside.]*

Enter Lockit, Macheath, and Peachum.

Lock. Set your heart at rest, Captain—you have neither the chance of love or money for another escape, for you are ordered to be call'd down upon your trial immediately.

Peach. Away, huffies!—this is not a time for a man to be hampered with his wives—you see the gentleman is in chains already.

Lucy. O husband, husband! my heart long'd to see thee, but to see thee thus distracts me!

Polly. Will not my dear husband look upon his Polly? Why hadst thou not flown to me for protection? with me thou hadst been safe.

AIR LII. *The last time I came o'er the moor.*

Polly. Hither, dear husband! turn your eyes.

Lucy. Bestow one glance to cheer me.

Polly. Think with that look thy Polly dies.

Lucy. O shun me not, but hear me.

Polly. 'Tis Polly sues.

Lucy. ———'Tis Lucy speaks.

Polly. Is thus true love requited?

Lucy. My heart is bursting.

Polly. ———Mine too breaks.

Lucy. Must I,

Polly. ———Must I be slighted?

Mac. What would you have me say, ladies? — You see, this affair will soon be at an end, without my disobliging either of you.

Peach. But the settling this point, Captain, might prevent a law-suit between your two widows.

AIR LIII. *Tom Tinker's my true love, &c.*

Mac. Which way shall I turn me—how can I decide?

Wives, the day of our death, are as fond as a bride,

One wife is too much for most husbands to hear,

But two at a time there's no mortal can bear.

48 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

This way, and that way, and which way they will.
What would comfort the one, t'other wife would take ill.

Polly. But if his own misfortunes have made him insensible to mine—a father sure will be more compassionate—Dear, dear Sir! sink the material evidence, and bring him off at his trial—Polly upon her knees begs it of you.

AIR LIV. *I am a poor shepherd undone.*

When my hero in court appears,
And stands arraign'd for his life,
Then think of poor Polly's tears,
For ah! poor Polly's his wife.
Like the sailor he holds up his hand,
Distrest on the dashing wave;
To die a dry death at land,
Is as bad as a watry grave.
And alas, poor Polly!
Alack and well-a-day!
Before I was in love,
Oh! ev'ry month was May.

Lucy. If Peachum's heart is hardened, sure you, Sir, will have more compassion on a daughter—I know the evidence is in your power. How then can you be a tyrant to me? [Kneeling.]

AIR LV. *I am the lovely, &c.*

When he holds up his hand, arraign'd for his life,
O think of your daughter, and think I'm his wife!
What are cannons or bums, or clashing of swords!
For death is more certain by witnesses words:
Then nail up their lips, that dead thunder allay,
And each month of my life will hereafter be May.

Lo. Macheath's time is come, Lucy—We know our own affairs, therefore let us have no more whimpering or whining.

AIR LVI. *A cobbler there was, &c.*

Ourselves, like the great, to secure a retreat,
When matters require it, must give up our gang;
And good reason why,
Or instead of the fry,
Ev'n Peachum and I,

Like poor pretty rascals might hang, hang,

Like poor petty rascals might hang.

Peach. Set your heart at rest, Polly—your husband is to die today—therefore if you are not already provided, 'tis high time to look about for another. There's comfort for you, you slut.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA. 49

Lock. We are ready, Sir, to conduct you to the Old Bailey. *AIR LVII. Bonny Durdan.*

Mac. The charge is prepar'd, the lawyers are met,

The judges all rang'd (a terrible show!)

I go undismay'd—for death is a debt,

A debt on demand—so take what I owe.

Then farewell, my love—dear charmers, adieu;

Contented I die—'tis the better for you.

Here ends all dispute for the rest of our lives,

For this way at once I please all my wives.

Now, gentlemen, I am ready to attend you.

[*Exeunt Peachum, Lockit, and Macheath.*]

Polly. Follow them, Filch, to the court; and when the trial is over, bring me a particular account of his behaviour, and of every thing that happened—You'll find me here with Miss Lucy. [*Exit Filch.*] But why is all this music?

Lucy. The prisoners whose trials are put off till next session are diverting themselves.

Polly. Sure there is nothing so charming as music! I'm fond of it to distraction—But, alas! now all mirth seems an insult upon my affliction. Let us retire, my dear Lucy, and indulge our sorrows—The noisy crew, you see, are coming upon us. [*Exeunt.*]

A dance of prisoners in chains, &c.

SCENE, The condemned hole.

Macheath in a melancholy posture.

AIR LVIII. Happy groves.

O cruel, cruel, cruel case!

Must I suffer this disgrace?

AIR LIX. Of all the girls that are so smart.

Of all the friends in time of grief,

When threat'ning death looks grimmer,

Not one so sure can bring relief,

As this best friend, a brimmer.

[*Drinks.*]

AIR LX. Britons, strike home.

Since I must swing—I scorn, I scorn to wince or whine.

AIR LXI. Chevy chase.

[*Rises.*]

But now again my spirits sink,

I'll raise them high with wine. [*Drinks a glass of wine.*]

AIR LXII. To old Sir Simon the king.

But valour the stronger grows

The stronger liquor we're drinking.

And how can we feel our woes,

When we've lost the trouble of thinking? [*Drinks.*]

AIR LXIII. *Joy to great Caesar.*

If thus—A man can die

Much bolder with brandy. [*Pours out a bumper.*]AIR LXIV. *There was an old woman, &c.*So I drink off this bumper—and now I can stand the test,
And my comrades shall see, that I die as brave as the best.[*Drinks.*]AIR LXV. *Did you ever hear of a gallant sailor.*

But can I leave my pretty hussies,

Without one tear or tender sigh?

AIR LXVI. *Why are my eyes still flowing.*

Their eyes, their lips, their kisses,

Recall my love—Ah! must I die!

AIR LXVII. *Green sleeves.*

Since laws were made for ev'ry degree,

To curb vice in others as well as in me,

I wonder we ha'n't better company

Upon Tyburn tree!

But gold from law can take out the sting;

And if rich men like us were to swing,

'Twould thin the land such numbers to string

Upon Tyburn tree.

Sailor. Some friends of yours, captain, desire to be
admitted—I leave you together.*Enter Ben. Budge and Mat. of the Mint.**Mac.* For my having broke prison, you see, gentlemen,
I am ordered immediate execution—The sheriff's of-
ficers, I believe, are now at the door. That Jemmy
Twitcher should peach me, I own surprized me—'Tis a
plain proof that the world is all alike, and that even our
gang can no more trust one another, than other people;
therefore I beg you, gentlemen, to look well to yourselves;
for in all probability you may live some months longer.*Mat.* We are heartily sorry, captain, for your mis-
fortune—but 'tis what we must all come to.*Mac.* Peachum and Lockit, you know, are infamous
scoundrels; their lives are as much in your power as
yours are in theirs—Remember your dying friend—
'tis my last request—Bring those villains to the gal-
lows before you, and I am satisfied.*Mat.* We'll do it.*Jai.* Miss Polly and Miss Lucy intreat a word with you.*Mac.* Gentlemen, adieu.[*Exeunt Ben. Budge and Mat. of the Mint.*]

Enter Lucy and Polly.

Mac. My dear Lucy—my dear Polly—whatsoever hath past between us, is now at an end—If you are fond of marrying again, the best advice I can give you, is to ship yourselves off for the West Indies, where you'll have a fair chance of getting a husband a-piece, or by good luck, two or three, as you like best.

Polly. How can I support this sight!

Lucy. There is nothing moves one so much as a great man in distress.

AIR LXVIII. *All you that must take a leap, &c.*

Lucy. Wou'd I might be hang'd!

Polly. ————— And I would so too!

Lucy. To be hang'd with you,

Polly. ————— My dear, with you.

Mac. O leave me to thought! I fear! I doubt!

I tremble! I droop!—See my courage is out.

[Turns up the empty bottle.]

Polly. No token of love?

Mac. ————— See my courage is out.

[Turns up the empty pot.]

Lucy. No token of love?

Polly. ————— Adieu!

Lucy. ————— Farewel!

Mac. But hark! I hear the toll of the bell.

Chorus. Tol de rol lol, &c.

Failer. Four women more, captain, with a child a-piece. See, here they come.

Enter Women and Children.

Mac. What! four wives more!—this is too much—Here—tell the sheriff's officers I am ready. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter Beggar and Player.

Play. But, honest friend, I hope you don't intend that Macheath shall be really executed.

Beg. Most certainly, Sir—To make the piece perfect, I was for doing strict poetical justice. Macheath is to be hanged; and for the other personages of the drama, the audience must suppose they were all either hanged or transported.

Play. Why then, friend, this is downright deep tragedy. The catastrophe is manifestly wrong; for an opera must end happily.

Beg. Your objection, Sir, is very just, and is easily removed; for you must allow, that in this kind of drama 'tis no matter how absurdly things are brought about—

so—you rabble there—run, and cry, A reprieve—Let the prisoner be brought back to his wives in triumph.

Play. All this we must do to comply with the taste of the town.

Beg. Through the whole piece you may observe such a similitude of manners in high and low life, that it is difficult to determine whether (in the fashionable vices) the fine gentlemen imitate the gentlemen of the road, or the gentlemen of the road the fine gentlemen. Had the play remained as I at first intended, it would have carried a most excellent moral; 'twould have shewn that the lower sort of people have their vices in a degree as well as the rich, and that they are punished for them.

Enter to them Macheath, with rabble, &c.

Mac. So it seems I am not left to my choice, but must have a wife at last. Look ye, my dears, we will have no controversy now. Let us give this day to mirth, and I am sure she who thinks herself my wife will testify her joy by a dance.

All. Come, a dance, a dance.

Mac. Ladies, I hope you will give me leave to present a partner to each of you: and (if I may without offence) for this time I take Polly for mine—and for life, you slut, for we were really married—As for the rest—But at present keep your own secret. [To Polly.

A DANCE.

AIR LXIX. *Lumps of pudding, &c.*

Thus I stand like a Turk with his doxies around,
From all sides their glances his passion confound,
For black, brown, and fair, his inconstancy burns,
And the different beauties subdue him by turns:
Each calls forth her charms to provoke his desires;
Tho' willing to all, but with one he retires:
Then think of this maxim, and put off all sorrow,
The wretch of today may be happy tomorrow.

Chorus. Then think of this maxim, &c.

[*Excunt omnes.*

THE END.